



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 6/18/2003

GAIN Report Number: E23110

European Union

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Private sector food safety certification

2003

Approved by:

Christine Strossman

U.S. Mission to the European Union, Brussels

Prepared by:

Sandie Kipe

Report Highlights:

Food retailers in Europe have taken the initiative to address food safety globally through the Global Food Safety Initiative. Producers have taken similar steps in creating EurepGAP. Each group has established benchmarks and standards for food safety after increased consumer concerns.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E2]

Global Food Safety Initiative

International food retailers, primarily based in Europe, launched the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) in May 2000. GFSI was founded after widespread food safety concerns arose related to outbreaks of mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease. GFSI is based on the principle that food safety is a non-competitive issue and any problem arising in the area can cause repercussions on the whole sector. The main objectives of GFSI are to strengthen food safety globally, ensure consumer protection, strengthen consumer confidence, set requirements for food safety schemes, and to improve cost efficiency throughout the food supply chain. CIES-the Food Business Forum facilitates GFSI.

Key priorities have been set to accomplish the main objectives that GFSI was created to carry out. The first is to benchmark food safety standards worldwide. GFSI does not establish new standards, instead it set criteria to benchmark existing food safety standards. This benchmark includes establishing food safety management systems and good practices for agriculture, manufacturing and distribution, as well as performing HACCP. The food safety standards apply to the entire food supply chain, not only at the retail level. GFSI's scope is specifically focused on private label goods and produce, which account for 75 percent of the supermarket assortment in Europe.

The GFSI logo is not used on consumer level labeling, but will be used exclusively in business-to-business dealings. The logo will be used to certify that the supplier is in compliance with the food safety standard. Compliance with an endorsed food safety standard is intended to be a preventative measure to minimize risk for firms throughout the supply chain.

Another key priority for GFSI is an early warning system to disseminate information quickly when a food safety issue arises. GFSI is developing an internet based "Early Warning System" which will give suppliers and retailers timely access to food safety incidents, issues, and facts.

Consumer awareness and confidence is another key priority for GFSI. The possibility of introducing a "Fight Bac" campaign modeled after the successful campaign to reduce pathogen contamination in the kitchen during food preparation at home in the United States is being pursued within GFSI.

A task force was created with the inception of GFSI to carry out the three mentioned priorities. Since 2000, the task force has doubled in size to include over 50 retailer quality managers. This group represents 65 percent of food retail revenue worldwide. It is comprised of primarily European retailers, however, retailers from South Africa, Australia, United States, Canada, and Israel are members. A complete list of members is attached for reference.

EurepGAP -- Food Safety in On-Farm Production

In terms of on farm production, many GFSI companies rely on the standards set by the Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group Good Agricultural Practices (EurepGAP). EurepGAP was started in 1997 as an initiative by European retailers in response to food safety scares primarily related to BSE (mad cow disease) and consumer concerns related to the introduction of GM foods.

Retail members of EurepGAP are primarily based in Europe; however, supplier membership has expanded globally, including some developing countries. As of December 2002, firms in 20 different countries were EurepGAP certified, including 10 countries outside of the

European Union. Currently there are 3,889 certified growers, with a total area of 61,425 hectares EurepGAP certified agricultural products. GFSIs use of EurepGAP standards has also helped to spread EurepGAP benchmarks to producers around the world. Additional information on supplier and associate members of EurepGAP can be found at the Eurep website <http://www.eurep.org>.

Retailer	Country
Ahold	Netherlands
Albert Heijn	Netherlands
Asda	UK
Coop	Sweden
Coop	Switzerland
Coop Italia	Italy
Delhaize	Belgium
DRC / Belgium Auction Market	Belgium
Eroski	Spain
ICA	Sweden
Laurus	Netherlands
Marks & Spencer	UK
McDonald's Europe	Germany
Migros	Switzerland
Safeway	UK
Sainsbury's	UK
Somerfield	UK
Spar Österreich	Austria
Superquinn	Ireland
Superunie	Netherlands
Tesco	UK
Trade Service Netherlands BV	Netherlands
Waitrose	UK

EurepGAP is a supply chain partnership, focusing on the pre-farm gate aspect of the food supply chain. Similar to GFSI, it also is built on business-to-business partnerships; membership includes both suppliers and retailers at all points in the food supply chain. Likewise, the logo is not displayed on retail level products, it a safeguard for business to assure that all safety precautions have been taken. EurepGAP also has an extensive associate membership of certifiers and supporters.

EurepGAP sets a framework of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) intended for everyone along the supply chain from producers to retailers. The main function of EurepGAP is to fill in the holes within the existing food safety network. The EurepGAP standards include implementation of HACCP and GAP. The benchmark system of GAP also includes incorporating Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Crop Management (ICM) schemes within the framework of agriculture production.

In May 2003, EurepGAP changed its benchmarking procedure; under the new system all applications will be processed by JAS-ANZ. The Australian and New Zealand governments established JAS-ANZ as the recognized accreditation to help facilitate trade between the two countries. It currently accredits certification bodies in Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam who provide services for 90 accredited programs. JAS-ANZ is currently the only accreditation body outside of the EU that has a bi-lateral agreement with the European Co-operation of Accreditation.

Initially, EurepGAP began with certification standards for fresh fruit and vegetable products and now includes fresh flowers as well. Additional certifications for livestock, feed, and combinable products is currently being discussed.

Visit our website: our website www.useu.be/agri/usda.html provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules and food laws and allows easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information. More information on food safety can be found at <http://www.useu.be/agri/foodsafety.html>, http://www.ciesnet.com/global_food/main.html, <http://www.globalfoodsafety.com/>, and <http://www.eurep.org>. E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov <mailto:AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov>

Related reports from USEU Brussels:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
E21086	Global Food Safety Initiative	07/09/2001
E21134	Horticultural Products Certification	11/06/2001
E23090	Food Safety in the Enlarged EU	06/03/2003
E23084	Reports of Rapid Alert System Go Online	05/28/2003

GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE TASK FORCE**January 2003****Chairman :** **Alfons L. Schmid**, Vice President Food Safety, Royal Ahold, The Netherlands

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Albert Heijn , The Netherlands | ■ Loblaw Companies Limited , Canada |
| ■ AMS , The Netherlands | ■ Marks & Spencer plc , United Kingdom |
| ■ Asda Stores , United Kingdom | ■ Metro AG , Germany |
| ■ Auchan , France | ■ Migros , Switzerland |
| ■ Carrefour Group , France | ■ Pick’N Pay , South Africa |
| ■ Casino , France | ■ Price Chopper , USA |
| ■ Cold Storage , Singapore | ■ Rewe Zentral , Germany |
| ■ COOP Danmark , Denmark | ■ Royal Ahold , Netherlands |
| ■ COOP Italia , Italy | ■ Safeway plc , United Kingdom |
| ■ COOP Norge , Norway | ■ J. Sainsbury plc , United Kingdom |
| ■ COOP Norden , Norway | ■ Sobey’s , Canada |
| ■ COOP Sverige , Sweden | ■ Somerfield , United Kingdom |
| ■ COOP , Switzerland | ■ Sonae, S.A. , Portugal |
| ■ Cora Group , France | ■ Superquinn , Ireland |
| ■ CWS , United Kingdom | ■ Supersol , Israel |
| ■ Delhaize Group , Belgium | ■ Superunie , Netherlands |
| ■ Dunnes Stores , Ireland | ■ Tegut Gutberlet Stiftung & Co. , Germany |
| ■ Esselunga S.p.A. , Italy | ■ Tesco plc , United Kingdom |
| ■ FCD , France | ■ Waitrose Ltd , United Kingdom |
| ■ FMI , U.S.A. | ■ Wal*Mart , USA |
| ■ Food Lion LLC , U.S.A. | ■ Wegmans , USA |
| ■ The Great A&P CO. Canada | ■ Woolworths , South Africa |
| ■ Hannaford Bros , USA | ■ Woolworths Ltd. , Australia |
| ■ ICA AB , Sweden | |
| ■ JMR , Portugal | |
| ■ Kesko Corporation , Finland | |
| ■ KF Group , Sweden | |
| ■ The Kroger Co. , USA | |
| ■ Laurus , The Netherlands | |